

REMARKS

Amendments to the Claims

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate subject matter from now cancelled claim 11, thus it does not introduce any new matter into the claims. As claim 11 has already been examined, this amendment also presents no new issues for examination.

The dependent claims have been amended to eliminate redundancies due to the amendment to claim 1.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-15 stand rejected as being obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over EP 0742191 (relying on US Patent 6075174). To the extent the amended claims are deemed unpatentable over the cited prior art, these rejections are traversed for the following reasons.

US '174-fails to teach or direct those skilled in the art to first contact the mixture exiting the reactor with an organic constituent to react with the free boron trifluoride gas in the reactor exiting mixture. Nothing in US '174 suggests or teaches those skilled in the art to reduce or eliminate the free boron trifluoride gas in the mixture. US '174 is explicit in its teachings of selecting a stripping heating gas due to possible effects with the BF₃ gas in the stripping column.

In fact, it is because the stream contains a gas that US '174 must use a stripping column and not a distillation column. Distillation columns are used for the separation of liquids, while stripping columns are used for removal of a gas from a liquid (see Perry's Chemical Engineers' Handbook, Sixth Edition, Section 18). While both processes have the commonality of a liquid-mass transfer operation, the different processes are employed under different operation conditions. Thus, while the rejection maintains that it would have been obvious to substitute the stripping column of US '174 for the recited distillation column, this is incorrect. The presence of the BF₃ gas makes a distillation column unsuitable for the process taught by US '174.

It is respectfully requested that this rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

In light of this amendment, Applicants now believe that this application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants request early and favourable reconsideration in the form of a Notice of Allowance.

If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated, since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

Respectfully submitted,

February 13, 2009
Date

/Nancy T. Krawczyk/
Nancy T Krawczyk
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 38,744

Post Office Address (to which correspondence is to be sent):
ExxonMobil Chemical Co.
Law Technology
P.O. Box 2149
Baytown, Texas 77522-2149
Phone: 281-834-2429
Fax: 281-834-2495